

1 AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

2
3 1. (currently amended) An edge detector for detecting an edge of an object, said
4 edge detector comprising:

5
6 a first optical fiber, with a receiving end and a transmitting end, adapted to
7 receive laser light at the receiving end and create a light beam at the
8 transmitting end;

9
10 a second optical fiber, with a receiving end and a transmitting end, positioned
11 such that the receiving end of the second optical fiber receives the light beam
12 and transmits light to the transmitting end of the second optical fiber; and

13
14 an a single optical power detector optically coupled to the transmitting end of
15 the second optical fiber, the optical power detector having an output indicative
16 of the optical power of the light transmitted through the second optical fiber;

17
18 wherein the edge of the object is detected when the object at least partially obstructs
19 the light beam, ~~causing a change in~~ such that the output of the single optical power
20 detector is less than the output when the object is not within the light beam object
21 and greater than the output when the object is fully within the light beam.

22
23 2. (original) The edge detector of claim 1, further comprising a laser light source
24 coupled to the receiving end of the first optical fiber.

25
26 3. (original) The edge detector of claim 1, further comprising:

1 a mirror positioned to reflect said light beam;
2 wherein the receiving end of the second optical fiber receives the light beam after it
3 has been reflected by the mirror.
4

5 4. (original) The edge detector of claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and
6 second optical fibers is a single mode optical fiber.
7

8 5. (original) The edge detector of claim 1, wherein the light beam is less than 10
9 microns in diameter.
10

11 6. (currently amended) The edge detector of claim 1, wherein the transmitting end
12 of the first optical fiber and the receiving end of the second optical fibers are held in
13 opposition by a retainer.
14

15 7. (original) The edge detector of claim 6, wherein said retainer further comprises:
16 a frame; and
17 at least one retaining block attached to the frame,
18 wherein the first and second fibers are constrained to lie in one or more channels
19 formed between the frame and the at least one retaining block.
20

21 8. (currently amended) A device for positioning an edge of an object, said device
22 comprising:
23

24 a laser light source;
25

26 a first optical fiber, with a receiving end and a transmitting end, optically

1 coupled to the laser light source at the receiving end and creating a light
2 beam at the transmitting end;

3
4 an optical power detector, providing an optical power signal as output;

5
6 a second optical fiber, with a receiving end and a transmitting end, optically
7 coupled to the optical power detector at the transmitting end;

8
9 a retainer for holding said first and second optical fibers such that the
10 receiving end of the second optical fiber receives the light beam;

11
12 a positioning stage for adjusting the relative positions of the object and the
13 light beam; and

14
15 a controller operably coupled to the positioning stage and responsive to the optical
16 power signal, the controller being configured to cause the positioning stage to
17 position the edge of the object at a predetermined position ~~relative to~~ within the light
18 beam, such that the level of the optical power signal is less than the level when the
19 object is not within the light beam object and greater than the level when the object
20 is fully within the light beam.

21
22 9. (original) A device as in claim 8, wherein the controller is manually operated.

23
24 10. (original) A device as in claim 8, wherein the controller is an automatic
25 controller.

1 11. (original) A device as in claim 8, wherein the position of the object relative to the
2 light beam is adjusted so that the optical power signal is greater than a lower
3 threshold and less than an upper threshold.

4
5 12. (original) A device as in claim 11, wherein at least one of the lower and upper
6 thresholds is proportional to a maximum power which is the optical power at the
7 detector when no part of the object obstructs the light beam.

8
9 13. (original) A device as in claim 12, wherein the maximum power is predetermined
10 by a calibration.

11
12 14. (currently amended) A device as in claim 12, wherein the maximum power is
13 measured periodically during operation of the device.

14
15 15. (original) A device as in claim 11, wherein at least one of the lower and upper
16 thresholds is dependent upon a minimum power, which is the optical power at the
17 detector when the light beam is completely interrupted by the object, and upon a
18 maximum power, which is the optical power at the detector when no part of the
19 object obstructs the light beam.

20
21 16. (original) A device as in claim 8, wherein the object is supported by the
22 positioning stage.

23
24 17. (original) A device as in claim 8, wherein the retainer is coupled to the
25 positioning stage.

1 18. (withdrawn) An edge detector for detecting an edge of an object, said edge
2 detector comprising:

3
4 an optical coupler, having at least three ports adapted to receive laser light at
5 a first port of the at least three ports;

6
7 an optical fiber optically coupled to and receiving laser light from a second
8 port of the at least three ports at a first end and creating a light beam at a
9 second end;

10
11 a mirror separated from the second end of the optical fiber by a gap and
12 positioned to receive the laser light beam and reflect it back to the second
13 end of the optical fiber;

14 92
15 93
16 a retainer for holding the optical fiber and the mirror; and

17 an optical power meter optically coupled to a third port of the at least three
18 ports, the optical power meter having an output indicative of the optical power
19 of the light transmitted through the second optical fiber;

20
21 wherein the edge of the object is detected when an object in the gap at least partially
22 obstructs the light beam, causing a change in the output of the optical power meter.

23
24 19. (withdrawn) The edge detector of claim 18, further comprising a laser light
25 source optically coupled to the first port of the at least three ports.

1 20. (withdrawn) The edge detector of claim 18, wherein the optical fiber is a single
2 mode optical fiber.

3
4 21. (withdrawn) The edge detector of claim 18, further comprising:

5
6 a positioning stage for adjusting the relative positions of the object and the
7 light beam; and

8
9 a controller operably coupled to the positioning stage and responsive to the
10 optical power signal, the controller being configured to cause the positioning
11 stage to position the object at a predetermined position relative to the light
12 beam.

13
14 22. (withdrawn) A device as in claim 21, wherein the controller is manually operated.

15
16 23. (withdrawn) A device as in claim 21, wherein the controller is an automatic
17 controller.

18
19 24. (withdrawn) A device as in claim 21, wherein the position of the object relative to
20 the light beam is adjusted so that the optical power signal is greater than a lower
21 threshold and less than an upper threshold.

22
23 25. (withdrawn) A device as in claim 24, wherein at least one of the lower and upper
24 thresholds is proportional to a maximum power which is the optical power at the
25 detector when no part of the object obstructs the light beam.

1 26. (withdrawn) A device as in claim 18, wherein the optical coupler is an optical
2 circulator with at least three ports.

3
4 27. (currently amended) A system for detecting an edge of an object, said system
5 comprising:

6 an edge detector, said edge detector comprising:

7
8 a first optical fiber, with a receiving end and a transmitting end,
9 adapted to receive laser light at the receiving end and create a light
10 beam at the transmitting end;

11
12 a second optical fiber, with a receiving end and a transmitting end,
13 positioned such that the receiving end of the second optical fiber
14 receives the light beam and transmits light to the transmitting end of
15 the second optical fiber; and

16
17 an optical power detector optically coupled to the transmitting end of
18 the second optical fiber, the optical power detector having an output
19 indicative of the optical power of the light transmitted through the
20 second optical fiber;

21
22 an object positioning stage for adjusting the position of the object in a first
23 direction; and

24
25 a detector positioning stage for adjusting the position of the edge detector in a
26 second direction;

1
2 wherein the edge of the object is detected when the object at least partially obstructs
3 the light beam, ~~causing a change in~~ such that the output of the optical power
4 detector is less than the output when the object is not within the light beam object
5 and greater than the output when the object is fully within the light beam.
6

7 28. (currently amended) A system as in claim 27, further comprising a controller
8 operably coupled to the object positioning stage and the detector positioning stage
9 and responsive to the optical power signal, the controller being configured to cause
10 the object positioning stage and the detector positioning stage to position the edge
11 of the object at a predetermined position relative to the light beam and hold the
12 object stationary.
13

14 29. (original) A system as in claim 27, further comprising an object holder mounted
15 on the object positioning stage for holding one or more objects.
16

17 30. (original) A system as in claim 27, further comprising a detector holder mounted
18 on the detector positioning stage for holding the edge detector.
19

20 31. (currently amended) A system as in claim 30, further comprising an edge
21 detector calibration fiduciary ~~fiducial~~ attached to the detector holder at a known
22 location for use in the calibration of the edge detector.
23

24 32. (original) A system as in claim 27, wherein the first direction is substantially
25 perpendicular to the second direction.
26

1 33. (original) A system as in claim 27, wherein the one of the object positioning
2 stage and the detector positioning stage includes a linear servo-motor.
3

4 34. (currently amended) A method for positioning an edge of an object, said method
5 comprising:
6

7 generating a light beam by passing light from a laser light source through a
8 first optical fiber;
9

10 receiving the light beam from the first optical fiber through a second optical
11 fiber;
12

13 detecting the optical power of the received light; and
14

15 positioning the edge of the object within the light beam such that the second
16 optical fiber is partially obscured and the optical power of the received light is
17 greater than a lower threshold and less than an upper threshold.
18

19 35. (original) A method as in claim 34, wherein at least one of the lower and upper
20 thresholds is proportional to a maximum power which is the optical power at the
21 detector when no part of the object obstructs the light beam.
22

23 36. (original) A method as in claim 34, wherein the maximum power is
24 predetermined by a calibration.
25

1 37. (currently amended) A method as in claim 34, wherein the maximum power is
2 measured periodically during operation when the edge of the object is not within the
3 light beam.
4

5 38. (original) A method as in claim 34, wherein the positioning is performed by a
6 positioning stage.
7

8 39. (original) A method as in claim 38, wherein the object is supported by the
9 positioning stage and said positioning is achieved by moving the object.
10

11 40. (original) A method as in claim 38, wherein the retainer is coupled to the
12 positioning stage and said positioning is achieved by moving the retainer.
13

14 41. (original) A method as in claim 38, further comprising:
15

16 controlling the positioning stage in response to the optical power.
17

18 42. (original) A method as in claim 41, wherein said controlling comprises setting a
19 target optical power and repeatedly moving the positioning stage by a distance
20 proportional to the difference between the optical power and the target optical power
21 until the optical power is greater than the lower threshold and less than the upper
22 threshold.
23

24 43. (original) A method as in claim 41, wherein said controlling comprises setting a
25 target optical power and repeatedly moving the positioning stage by a predetermined

1 distance until the optical power is greater than the lower threshold and less than the
2 upper threshold.

3
4 44. (new) A method in accordance with claim 34, wherein generating the light beam
5 further comprises:

6
7 passing the laser light to an optical coupler, the optical coupler being coupled
8 to the first optical fiber at a first port and to the second optical fiber at a
9 second port; and

10
11 passing the laser light through a third optical fiber, coupled at a first end to a
12 third port of the optical coupler, the light beam being generated at a second
13 end of the third optical fiber;

14
15 and wherein receiving the light beam further comprises:

16
17 receiving the light at the second end of the third optical fiber after it has been
18 reflected by a mirror, the mirror being separated from the second end of the
19 third optical fiber by a gap and positioned to receive the light beam and reflect
20 it back to the second end of the third optical fiber;

21
22 passing the received light from the third optical fiber to the third port of the
23 optical coupler; and

24
25 passing the received light from the second port of the optical coupler to the
26 second optical fiber.